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Second EPS General Conference (October 1972)

Trends in Physics

Second General Conference of the European Physical Society organized by the German Physical Society (Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft e.V.)

3-6 October 1972, Wiesbaden, Fed. Rep. of Germany

Introduction

The exhaustive preparations over and the detailed plans implemented, 1300 physicists from 26 countries converged on the Rhein-Main-Halle in Wiesbaden from 3-6 October 1972 for the Second General Conference of the European Physical Society. For four days (and nights), Wiesbaden was to be a hive of intellectual and social activity which at once reaffirmed the purpose and demonstrated the success of the European Physical Society as a focus for international physics. There were four major aspects of the Conference which were certainly worthy of recording:

Plenary Lectures — by an exceptional array of stimulating speakers and brilliant lecturers who, somehow, managed each to capture his own particular inspiration and bring it before the audience. The ability of physicists to apply themselves in the fields as diverse as cosmology (Kundt), biophysics (Eigen), economics (Tinbergen), atmospheric science (Fiocco), education (Le Corre), politics (Casimir) — and even fundamental physics — was clearly shown in this part of the programme.

Divisional Sessions — organized by the Specialized Divisions of EPS to provide a hard core of scientific content in 50 lectures.

Physics Exhibition — a display by over 80 instrument and service organizations which reflected the leading edges of research at the present moment, with particular emphasis on cryogenics and optics.

European Physical Society events — there were the following important meetings, of which the first two will be reported in the next issue of *Europhysics News*

- (a) the discussion conducted by the Advisory Committee on Physics and Society on 'Public policy and current prospects';
- (b) the General Assembly Meeting;
- (c) a special meeting of the Advisory Committee on Applied Physics and Physics in Industry with Associate Members;
- (d) Board Meetings and Business Meetings of Divisions.

These four aspects were part of the theme 'Trends in Physics' — an attempt to present a broad review of the current state and future course of physics. The general aim of the Conference was to give the active physicist insights extending outside his own specific domain. Throughout the Conference, however, one subject emerged as predominant — the close relationship between physics and society. Another striking feature was the abundant application of physics, fundamental and applied, to modern technological development.



L. von Friedeburg, Hessen Kultusminister, welcomes EPS President H.B.G. Casimir (left) at the start of the Second EPS General Conference.

The only regrettable affair of the whole Conference was the inability of physicists from USSR to attend. Unfortunately, two of the 15 plenary speakers — L.A. Artsimovich and A. Oraevsky — were affected, the former for health reasons and the latter for family reasons. However, physicists who wish to read their two papers can find that by Artsimovich in *Nature* (1 September 1972, pages 18-22) and that by Oraevsky in the *Volume of Plenary Lectures* (to be published by EPS in March 1973). For a splendid Conference and a successful Exhibition, all members of the European Physical Society must surely be deeply thankful to W. Martienssen (Chairman of the Programme Committee) and U. Dihle (Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee) who did so much work in preparation.

Opening Session

The President of EPS, H.B.G. Casimir, acted as Chairman. He welcomed participants and exhibitors to the event, before introducing R. Schmitt, Mayor of Wiesbaden, W. Buckel, President of the German Physical Society, and L. von Friedeburg, Hessen Kultusminister.

As the President of the German Physical Society, W. Buckel expressed his deep appreciation to the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft and to the Hessisches Kultusministerium for their financial support. He also thanked the Akademischer Austauschdienst and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for the financial help to invite scientists from Eastern European countries. After pledging the continued support of the German Physical Society to EPS, he could not resist formulating the slogan 'PHYSICISTS FOR EUROPE'.